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# EOS

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## American Geophysical Union Announces WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH

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## News

### New Hot Vents in NE Pacific

Over the past few years many workers have been attracted to the Juan de Fuca ridge 500 km off the Pacific northwest coast to study its tectonics. Investigations by both American earth scientists in the southern part of the system and Canadians where the northern extension enters territorial waters provided much of the background for the first submersible venture on this actively spreading ridge. In August 1983 a joint expedition of Canadian and American geologists and biologists set out to examine the ridge in the area of a seamount that sits astride the spreading axis. Scientific participants came from the universities of British Columbia, Victoria, Washington, Toronto, California at Santa Barbara, and the Institute of Ocean Sciences, British Columbia.

The three-person submersible *PISCES IV* is owned by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada) and is operated by the Institute of Ocean Sciences, Sidney, B.C. This cruise represented her first venture below 800 m; she performed eight dives and averaged 9 hours a dive.

The seamount caldera, about 12 km<sup>2</sup>, is floored with young, glassy lavas that are pitted with collapse features. The caldera walls, on the other hand, are older and cut by a maze of fissures. Hydrothermal activity was discovered in the continuation of one fissure on the caldera floor at 1580 m and close to the targeted junction of the northern caldera wall and the spreading axis. The fissure, 300 m long and barely wide enough to allow the submersible entry, contained a series of warm-water vents with water to 35°C. The biota here was prolific but no sulphide deposits were evident. Outside the fissure, however, two isolated chimneys were found, from one of which warm water still issued. The structures were about 9 m high and 4 m wide at the base. A 150-kg sample revealed a porous mass of sulphates, iron and zinc sulphides,

and remains of beardworms (pogonophorans). Animal growth on the glassy surfaces in the caldera was sparse. Approach to the vents was indicated by increasing numbers of crabs and occasional bacterial mats. The fissure itself was carpeted by mats in which polychaetes and gastropods could be seen. In areas of active venting, the exit of water was obscured by extensive growths of beardworms that formed large structures in which many other vent-specific species were found (see cover). In addition to numerous rock samples, the sub also collected thousands of animal specimens and drew samples of the vent water.

Plans for future work on this spreading system are being made for next year. The *Alvin* will spend much of the summer on the ridge while *PISCES* will return to the axial seamount; a proposal is also being reviewed to bring the French submersible *Cyana* to the area at the same time. The Juan de Fuca may need some traffic beacons, both on the surface and on the floor, for some time to come.

This news item was contributed by Verena Tunnicliffe, who is with the University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., Canada V8W 2Y2.

### Kinetic Factors in Geothermometry

The application of geothermometer/geobarometer mineral assemblages as markers of temperature and pressure in geologic formations has become highly sophisticated by the inclusion of kinetic factors in analytic procedures. That a chemically complex mineral assemblage has equilibrated during its geologic history under intense conditions is a major premise in geothermometry. That the equilibrium conditions have been quenched into the phases so that composition and crystal structure may be used to reveal the temperature-pressure-fugacity that characterized a point—the most intense point—in an assemblage's geological history is another premise. Rarely does either premise prove entirely true, but kinetic factors, if understood, could assist in their interpretation.

Recently A. C. Lasaga developed an analysis he dubbed "geospeedometry" as an extension of conventional geothermometric analysis (*Kinetics and Equilibrium in Mineral Reactions*, S. K. Saxena (Ed.), Springer-Verlag, New York, pp. 81-114, 1983). Lasaga treated analyses of several ion-exchange mineral pair geothermometers to include diffusion coefficients, time factors, and thermal evolution. The result was a set of working equations to calculate the kinetic response of ion exchange geothermometers to their thermal history.

The approach of geospeedometry is valuable in evaluating the rate-determining steps of mineral reactions. The ultimate value of a geothermometer is not necessarily evident in a lack of chemical zoning, as had been thought in many instances. It is largely the mineral phase with the slowest diffusion process in the temperature range of interest that identifies a useful mineral assemblage. Lasaga found, for instance, that the usefulness of olivine crystals as geothermometers is narrowly limited to relatively fast cooling rates (greater than 10°C per year). By contrast, the suitability of garnet geothermometers in Lasaga's words is "quantitatively proven." One must be cautious, however, in interpreting upper-mantle temperature-pressure conditions from studies of garnet-pyroxene pairs; in some examples, lack of equilibrium is a source of error.—PMB

### Chesapeake Bay Under Stress

According to extensive data obtained over its 13,000 km of shoreline, the Chesapeake Bay has been suffering a major, indeed unprecedented, reduction in submerged vegetation. Chesapeake Bay is alone in experiencing decline in submerged vegetation. Other estuary systems on the east coast of the United States are not so affected. These alarming results were obtained by the synthesis of the findings of numerous individual groups in addition to large consortium projects on the Chesapeake done over the past decade. R. J. Orth and R. A. Moore of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science pointed to the problem of the severe decline of submerged grasses on the Bay and along its tributaries. In a recent report, Orth and Moore note: "The decline, which began in the 1960's and accelerated in the 1970's, has affected all species in all areas. Many major river systems are now totally devoid of any rooted vegetation" (*Science*, 222, 51-53, 1983).

The precipitous decline in the many different varieties of submerged aquatic vegetation has serious implications for the Chesapeake Bay. Important brackish-water marine life and water fowl use the so-called salt-grasses

and cannot exist without them. Moreover, the grasses play an important function in stabilizing the sedimentary formations that underlie the Bay. Without this stabilization, the fragile shorelines are subject to rapid destruction. The 200-km long Chesapeake Bay is the world's largest estuary. It could become characterized by highly sedimented shallows within decades instead of following a gradual change thought to require geologic processes over a period of several thousand years.

Analysis of seeds and pollen stored in Bay sediments in some areas has revealed a continuity in the existence of Bay grasses for more than 200 years. Suddenly, in 1973, they disappeared from the stratigraphic record. In the ensuing 10 years there has been no sign of new vegetation. This decline extends to all species, and is thus not localized.

The causes for the decline of Bay grasses are not so simple to deduce. In the simplest analogy it would appear that the loss of grasses has resulted from decreasing light penetration of Bay water because of the increased growth of phytoplankton and because of fine sediment dispersal. Nutrient enrichment is a probable cause. The concentrations of phosphorus, nitrogen, and chlorophyll have been increasing for several decades in direct or indirect response to the increased transport of fertilizers into the Bay. Likewise, pesticides could affect the plant life.

In upper Chesapeake Bay regions, the decline of the critical submerged grasses began in the 1960's. However, the 1972 date, which applies to the lower Bay, coincides with the date of Tropical Storm Agnes. Large volumes of fresh water and sediment flowed into the Bay after Agnes. Salinities were reduced in all parts of the Bay for several weeks, affecting much of the brackish water marine life. Major changes in the existing submerged grasses of the Bay occurred. The decline has not stopped. It would be important to study the silting and sediment record in detail. Likewise, it will be important to preserve all areas of existing submerged grasses.—PMB

### Counting Clouds

A 5-year, international scientific program is under way to study and describe in detail the earth's cloud cover. In the hope that it will contribute to our understanding of how clouds affect, and are affected by, weather and climate, the United States, Canada, Japan, India, and several nations of the European community are participating in the International Satellite Cloud Climatology Project. The project will use data from an array of earth-orbiting satellites to inventory the whirling clouds below.

The ultimate aim of the study is to improve worldwide weather forecasting. Clouds can have either a cooling or warming effect—cooling when they reflect incoming solar radiation back into space, and warming when they trap heat reflected from the earth's surface. The net effect is still a matter for study, however, as are the questions of whether a global climatic warming would increase or decrease cloud cover, or whether clouds stabilize or destabilize the climate.

The project will use data and images from five geostationary meteorological satellites: the European Space Agency's Meteosat, India's Insat, Japan's GMS (Geostationary Meteorological Satellite), and two U.S. Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites, GOES-East and GOES-West. Also contributing data will be the U.S. TIROS-N polar-orbiting satellite. All six satellites are expected to be operational by the end of 1983.

The lead U.S. agencies for the project are the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and Robert Schiffer of NASA is the international project manager. The National Science Foundation and the departments of Energy and Defense are also participating in the project, which is being conducted under the aegis of the World Climate Research Program, sponsored jointly by the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council of Scientific Unions.

### Offshore Oil Prospects Improve

The issues, prospects, and environmental concerns about drilling for offshore oil and gas are being seen in a different light than at any other time during the past decade. Exploration drilling on offshore locations is proceeding at a high rate, and environmental concerns, while recognized as real, appear to be a lot less worrisome than might have been predicted a decade ago. Part of the reason for the changes in levels of concern results from the close monitoring programs that have been in effect for the past few years. Paul R. Ryan of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution recently described explo-

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Call for Papers published in *Eos*, November 15, 1983.

ration activities on Georges Bank: "We now have the results of the first year of monitoring, and, although eight wells are considered a minimal observational test, there were no biological changes in the benthic community that could be attributed to drilling activity." (*Oceanus*, 26, 2, 1983). The U.S. Geological Survey studied the Georges Bank drilling activities as well. Barium from drilling muds was detected at the sites, but in decreasing concentrations at distances away from drilling rigs. There was no evidence that the discharges caused biological changes. According to Ryan: "Postdrilling concentrations of barium were found to be within the range of predrilling concentrations measured at other locations on the Bank. Concentrations of other metals measured were low and characteristic of unpolluted, coarse-grained sediment in other Continental Shelf areas."

A factor in present-day offshore oil and gas exploratory drilling is the experience gained from the Deep Sea Drilling Project. The drilling ship *Glomar Challenger* has penetrated the ocean floor of the Mariana Trench at water depths of approximately 7 km, setting an example whose model has been influential on exploration. Oil rigs must use riser systems to avoid the release of drilling muds and cuttings, and they generally must penetrate to greater depths in sediment than the *Glomar Challenger*. Nonetheless, offshore oil rigs are drilling in water depths of approximately 3 km, and then continuing into sediment for a kilometer or more. Because only a few percent of drillable offshore areas have been explored, the pace of this type of drilling will not lessen in the next decades. Undiscovered petroleum resources on continents and their shelves and ocean slopes are estimated at more than  $3 \times 10^{12}$  barrels ( $573 \times 10^{12}$  liters) worldwide.

In reference to the Law of the Sea, Hollis D. Hedberg recently stated: "The Law of the Sea Treaty, as presently proposed, fails to provide a sound and definite basis for drawing the limit between coastal-state and international jurisdiction over mineral resources along the outer edge of the continental margin where it extends more than 200 nautical miles from shore. In effect, this uncertainty means that exploration will be deterred over large areas of the continental margin. There are two formulas for determining boundaries allowed by the Law: the first is based on the impracticable measure of the thickness of sediments as a function of distance from the foot of the slope; the second involves the difficulty of drawing directly a precise base-of-slope boundary, with no provision for a guiding, internationally approved boundary zone within which each coastal state could establish its own precise boundary."

"No oil company is going to risk the huge amount of money required for a well in these very deep waters without clear demarcation of a national boundary. Hence, the region affected by the dubious boundary—which may be many thousands of square miles in area and commercially significant—becomes valuable to no one." (*Oceanus*, 26, 2, 1983).

Even under the constraints imposed by the Law of the Sea and by natural barriers of deep ocean sites, drilling is proceeding and the prospects of finding major fields are good. The potential problems of assessing the discharges from the drilling process continue to be addressed. R. P. Trorrone and J. H. Trefry of the Florida Institute of Technology recently described new techniques to trace the distribution of such discharges in a study conducted on the outer continental shelf of the northwest Gulf of Mexico (*Environmental Science and Technology*, 17, 507-512, 1983). As new drilling techniques with highly developed risers and discharge control methods are developed, new tests can assess their effectiveness in offshore operations.—PMB







## MARINE GEOCHEMIST

The Chemistry Department at The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution invites applications from researchers in the field of marine geochemistry. Applicants should have a Ph.D. and, preferably, postdoctoral experience with a demonstrated excellence in research in the area of organic geochemistry with particular interest and expertise in ancient sediment organic geochemistry or petroleum geochemistry. Experience with techniques in trace organic analysis such as gas chromatography/mass spectrometry/computer systems would be particularly valuable. Appointments will be made at the Assistant, Associate or Senior Scientist level depending on the candidate's qualifications. Interested candidates should send resume, transcript, reprints and names of potential referees to Personnel Manager.

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**Research Observer/U.S. Department of Commerce.** Position at Barrow, Alaska. Conducts scientific measurements at the NOAA Baseline Observatory in Barrow, Alaska. Will make measurements of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, ozone, aerosols, other trace constituents, and meteorological parameters. This position is an electronics specialist (instrument). Responsibilities are calibration and maintenance of the Observing Instruments and NOAA minicomputer. We seek applicants with electronics technician background with at least 4 years of experience or electronics engineer with at least 2 years experience. The experience should be specialized in electronic instrumentation calibration and maintenance.

This is a 15-month appointment. Duty station for the first two months will be in Boulder, Colorado for orientation and training then at Barrow, Alaska. NOAA will supply bachelor quarters at reasonable cost in Barrow. The Observatory is within 6 miles of Barrow, a community of about 2000 people. The measurements supply information for current atmospheric research into climate and climate change. We offer an adventure as well as good salary (about \$30,000-\$40,000 per year, depending on qualifications and experience). For more information, contact Mr. Bernard Mendonca, U.S. Dept. of Commerce/NOAA, 325 Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80503; telephone FTS 320-6735 or Commercial (303) 437-6735.

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Dr. Ralph R. von Frese

Chairman Search Committee

Department of Geology and Mineralogy

The Ohio State University

Columbus, OH 43210

Phone: (614) 422-6585 or 422-6721

Applications should include a resume, a statement of research interests and the names of at least three persons whom we may contact for recommendations. The closing date for applications is December 23, 1983. Appointments will be effective no later than October 1, 1984. Additional information can be obtained by writing or calling the search committee chairperson.

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**Atmospheric Physicist/Northern Arizona University.** Tenure-track assistant professor available January 10, 1984 (or August, 1984) in an eleven-month Physics Department with a joint appointment in Computer Science. Teaching is at the undergraduate level with approximately one-half time devoted to teaching courses related to laboratory applications of computers. Knowledge of FORTRAN at least one assembly language, and fundamental digital logic is essential. Approximately one-half time will be devoted to teaching and research in Physics. Areas of research interest could include radiative transfer, mesoscale dynamics, orographic flows and/or meteorological environmental instrumentation including remote sensing, and a complete resume, statement of research interest and professional goals and names of three references to: Dr. Kenneth O'Neil, Chairperson, Department of Physics, Room 9010, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86011.

Applications received prior to November 30 will receive full consideration. Ph.D. required. Academic salary range \$20,000-\$35,000. NAU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

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For consideration send resume, three letters of reference and a description of research to: Lyle McGinnis, Faculty Search, Department of Geology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-4101. Search will remain open until positions are filled.

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**Geology: Geomagnetism and Paleomagnetism** August 30

**Planetary and Planetary Science** September 27

**Atmospheric Sciences** September 27

**Tectonophysics** October 11

**Sedimentology** October 18

**Ocean Sciences** November 1

**Volcanology, Geochemistry, and Petrology** November 8

**Solar-Planetary Relationships** November 15

The state of candidates for all offices was carried in the June 21 issue.

**STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES**

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**Marine Environmental Sciences and Coastal Oceanography.** Opportunities for graduate and postgraduate teaching and research assistantships in the Marine Environmental Sciences and Coastal Oceanography program in the M.S. program in Marine Environmental Sciences and Coastal Oceanography. Additional summer support also available up to \$3000. Write: Graduate Program Chairman, Marine Sciences Research Center, State University of New York, Stony Brook, N.Y. 11794.

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